The Terminology of Anatomy and Physiology, by Dale Pierre Layman, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, NY 1983 293 p. $10.95 paper.

Dale Pierre Layman, limiting himself to the areas of anatomy and physiology, has designed this book as a programmed approach intended for self-study. He has appropriately regarded this book as supplemental to more thorough treatments of these 2 areas. As far as I know, this is a unique treatment, since most books of this sort deal with medical terminology in general. The author, therefore, has provided a valuable service to those teaching courses in these areas. Students approaching these subjects for the first time can easily feel overwhelmed by the large body of medical terminology taken from Greek and Latin. This book allows the student to focus primarily on matters pertinent to these areas, without confronting the formidable mass of general medical terminology. Through this focus on anatomy and physiology, however, Layman establishes a basis for the comprehension of terminology in other areas.

The programmed approach employed here begins with introductory material on "How to Use This Book" and on the system of prefixes, roots, and suffixes. The substance of the book is divided into 14 units with a total of 1130 learning frames. The first unit introduces the student to terms of structure and function; succeeding units follow on terms having to do with the cell, tissues and skin, and the various human systems, e.g. skeletal, nervous, digestive; the concluding unit is on human development from fertilization to birth. Each unit is illustrated with clearly labelled figures, credited to Linda Cook DeVona. Following the last unit is a series of self-tests and, finally, an index of items in the blanks within the text.

Layman has organized his materials well. Repetition appropriately reinforces older material, while new terminology is continually introduced, building upon the old. His strength lies in his ability to simplify explanations and descriptions of complex structures, while using technical terminology. In Unit 6, "Terms of the Nervous System," for example, while describing the interior of the brain, he identifies the "thalamus" as a bedroom, in which the "intermediate mass" is likened to a bed. A house with bedroom and bed illustrated alongside a midsagittal diagram of the brain reinforces the point. Layman's definitions, accompanied as they are by figures, frequently have a humorous tone. In some cases this may seem a bit juvenile and could, indeed, insult some students' intelligence. Such depictions, on the other hand, often by their very outlandishness, readily serve as mnemonic devices. A sausage, for example, drawn next to a diagram of the "endometrium" to convey the meaning of the "allantois," "sausage resembler," may be silly, but if one remembers this term through the vividness of that picture, then the author has succeeded. Such a technique, moreover, serves to remind the student of the sense of imagination in the formation of this terminology in a pre-scientific world.

The author could improve some aspects of this book to make them more serviceable with his excellent descriptions and useful definitions. It would have been helpful, if he had explained in the section on "How to Use This Book" that some blanks have a multiple choice format for the correct answer. The user soon becomes aware of the format, but there is some confusion, particularly in the earlier chapters, since the procedure is not used consistently. I also found it somewhat cumbersome to flip back and forth, as the author suggests, in order to review certain terminology. I was, moreover, a bit puzzled by the insertion early in each unit of tables listing significant terminology for the area in question, e.g. "Terms of the Heart and Associated Vessels," without any rationale and with no instructions pertaining to

these lists. A more significant drawback to this book is its index, which only tells the reader at what frame a particular term is introduced. A more valuable index would have included all references to each term.

None of the shortcomings noted above are very serious. I was more disturbed by some of the linguistic principles employed by Layman, who exhibits a certain hesitancy in this area. He states, for example, that "o" is "probably" the most common combining vowel. Is it or isn't it? (In general medical terminology "o" is most common, but in this book "i" appears almost as frequently.) He could have avoided difficulty here simply by noting that "o" and "i" are the most common connecting vowels. Although he correctly distinguishes between roots and suffixes, his designation of certain suffixes, e.g. "-is" and "-us," as meaning "presence of" is misleading. These endings originally served to place the root word in the nominative case, i.e. to name the object, not necessarily to show its presence.

Despite its linguistic difficulties, this book can still be a valuable supplement to the study of anatomy and physiology. I consider, nevertheless, the author's claim that it "provides new insights into subject matter" a bit overblown, since most of these insights have long been known to historians of science and etymologists. Likewise, I do not agree with the author that this book can be of value as a review for more advanced students, who would find most things too basic and oversimplified. As a tool to aid beginning students in controlling a formidable vocabulary, however, this book is, indeed, valuable. Although it does not solve the problem completely, it does provide the student with a good base from which to comprehend the massive body of terminology. Finally, the teacher who chooses this book ought to be wary of its linguistic difficulties.

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